

WE CLAIM:

1. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable components, comprising:
 - a first component that is arranged to edit an electronic document having editable objects;
 - a second component that is arranged to define a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired and to define a second location for the end of the editable object region;
 - a third component that is arranged to associate a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations; and
 - a fourth component that is arranged to encode in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein one of the first and second element further comprises the user identifier.
2. The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.
3. The computer-readable medium of Claim 2, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.
4. The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.
5. The computer-readable medium of Claim 4, wherein the editable objects are cells.
6. The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the first and second elements are imbedded in the ML-encoded electronic document at the first and second locations respectively.

7. The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, further comprising a fifth component that is arranged to output an ML file that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements.

8. The computer-readable medium of Claim 7, wherein the first element and the second element comprise a unique identifier by which the first and the second element are associated having a one-to-one correspondence.

9. The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the unique identifier is encoded with a level of editing permission that is to be granted to the specific user identified by the user identifier.

10. A method for handling electronic documents, comprising:
editing an electronic document having editable objects;
defining a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired;
defining a second location for the end of the editable object region;
associating a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations; and
encoding in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein one of the first and second element further comprises the user identifier.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

13. The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.
14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the editable objects are cells.
15. The method of Claim 10, further including imbedding the first and second elements in the ML-encoded electronic document at the first and second locations respectively.
16. The method of Claim 10, further comprising outputting an ML file that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements.
17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the first element and the second element comprise a unique identifier by which the first and the second element are associated having a one-to-one correspondence.
18. The method of Claim 10, wherein the unique identifier is encoded with a level of editing permission that is to be granted to the specific user identified by the user identifier.
19. A system for displaying and modifying electronic documents, comprising:
- an electronic document file that comprises editable objects;
 - an editor that is arranged to define a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired, to define a second location for the end of the editable object region, and to associate a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations; and
 - an encoder that is configured to encode in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that

defines the second location, wherein one of the first and second element further comprises the user identifier.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the electronic document is stored in a proprietary format.

21. The system of Claim 19, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

23. The system of Claim 19, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the editable objects are cells.

25. The system of Claim 19, wherein the first and second elements are imbedded in the ML-encoded electronic document at the first and second locations respectively.

26. The system of Claim 19, wherein the encoder is further configured to output an ML file that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements.

27. The system of Claim 26, wherein the first element and the second element comprise a unique identifier by which the first and the second element are associated having a one-to-one correspondence.

28. The system of Claim 19, wherein the unique identifier is encoded with a level of editing permission that is to be granted to the specific user identified by the user identifier.